

Veterans Memorial Garden Advisory Council

MINUTES FOR Thursday, March 9th, 2023 Meeting

Antelope Enclosed Shelter

3200 Memorial Drive

Lincoln Nebraska

7:00 a.m.

Advisory Council Members Present:

Craig Anderson, Ricki Barber, Brendan Moore, Marcy Haas, Jim Murphy, Carole Tanner (arrived at 7:10 a.m.)

Advisory Council Members Absent:

Thad Fineran, Joe Brownell, Thomas Blanton

Others Present:

Joyce Peck, Mark Orr, Diane Bartles

LPR/Lincoln Parks Foundation Staff Present:

Randy Gordon, Maggie Stuckey-Ross, Denise Pearce, J.J. Yost, Chris Myers, Shawn Quinn, Jocelyn Golden, and Jamie Granquist

1. Call to Order (roll call) & Introductions:

Craig Anderson called the meeting to order and prompted all attendees to introduce themselves to the group. Special recognition for outgoing member, Alexandria Evers, who is moving to Washington D.C. and will serve on the House Armed Services Committee.

Quorum was met with 9 members present.

2. Recognition of Open Meetings Act:

Craig Anderson noted that the meeting is subject to the Open Meetings Act and indicated where the Open Meetings Act notice was posted in the meeting room.

3. Pledge of Allegiance:

Craig asked attendees to remain indoors, move towards the windows overlooking the Gardens, to recite the Pledge, while saluting the flags outdoors.

4. Approval of Minutes: December 8, 2022:

Jim moved to approve; seconded by Brendan. Motion carried unanimously with 5 members.

5. Public Comments for items not listed on the agenda:

None.

6. Board Training: Jocelyn Golden, City Law

Annual training re: requirements for public advisory boards: Golden noted that she provides annual training to all the Parks and Recreation Department-staffed boards and councils. The training serves as a refresher for longer-term members and as an

introduction to board service for new members. Golden provided a document to the group for reference. Golden noted that VMGAC meetings are open to the public. The agenda, previous meeting's minutes and meeting notice also have to be made available to the public. Regarding meeting practice, motions are to be made by a Board Member and seconded by another Board Member; discussion should follow the second, followed by a roll call vote on the motion. Golden emphasized that Board-related business is public record. Golden advised the Board not to discuss Board-related items outside of the meeting or communicate on substantive Board business via text or email. She emphasized that board agenda items should be discussed only during a meeting.

7. Finance Report: Lincoln Parks Foundation:

Quarterly Financials—Randy presented the quarterly financials and provided an update on the Bricks of Honor fundraising campaign.

Enduring Honor Campaign—the campaign is about \$30,000 short of its goal/expecting to wrap up campaign yet this spring. Chris Beutler helping to close the gap. Diane asked if LPF can share who the donors are and about having something in Neighborhood Extra about donors. Randy will share donor names; LPRD staff agreed that write up in LJS (possibly Neighborhood Extra) is good idea. Jim inquired if the Veterans Fund is where the campaign donations are deposited. JJ confirmed this is correct and Parks & Recreation has been reimbursed for some project expenses. Craig asked if the 108 bricks purchased for 2022-23 BOH are all the new-style bricks; it was confirmed these will be the new style bricks.

8. Committee Reports

Facilities Committee:

- **Amendment to VMG Master Plan***

The Garden has a Master Plan that is approved by this Council. J.J. presented an amendment to the plan to reflect (1) the completed and anticipated work to replace the Bricks of Honor brick holders, and (2) the proposed Naval Aviators monument.

J.J. reported that Arrowstone is again fabricating the brick holders and Brick Markers will fabricate the brick. A contractor will work with LPRD to demo and install the new brick holders later this summer.

Schedule: July, remove old holders/concrete. August, new concrete and needed cure time. September- October is slated for installation and placement, with the goal to have the Gardens open for full public access by November.

The amendment to the Master Plan was presented to/approved by the Facilities Committee last week.

Diane asked if someone could come up with cost to move brick from multi and move it to Vietnam. J.J. let her know he can provide that cost, but it would essentially be the process of creating a new brick. Diane wondered if it is problematic to put another brick in and J.J. confirmed that it would not be.

Mark cautioned to think twice about removing any out of Multi, due to issues of finally getting correctly sealed, to which J.J. added that we have worked hard to find a product to get the new bricks to stay in place, and while it is not impossible to get them out but adds to potential problems with the brick holder.

Randy was asked about how many bricks are in the Garden now and he responded that there are about 5,000 and we've added a fourth line to add the conflict/plus fall into post 1980 holders.

It was stated that we will put some signs out in the Garden to alert folks to the work that will happen this summer/fall.

Brendan moved to approve the amendment to the Garden Master Plan; seconded by Jim. Motion carried unanimously with 6 members.

- **Post-911 Monument Update of Names**

Guidelines for Inscriptions on this monument were adopted about 6 years ago. Paragraph two states "The names inscribed on the monument will be Nebraskans who died while in service during the period of the War on Terrorism. Veterans may have either been killed in action while in a combat zone or died while serving in active duty in the United States armed services, including those who died in training."

Jamie and Joyce have been leading the research on this project, having compiled the spreadsheet in meeting packets.

Denise and Jamie discussed on the names on each of the three lists were compiled:

- First group: On the Post 9-11 monument.
- Second group: Not on the monument but are on the Nebraska Veterans Affairs Website, more specifically "Nebraskans Who Have Lost Their Lives in Service to Our Country Since 2003", listing 22 additional names. Staff is unsure why these names were not included initially; it may possibly relate to contacting the families.
- Third group: Additional research done by Joyce and Jamie, who reviewed obituaries, Federal Department of Defense website, and other public records, identifying 10 additional veterans with Nebraska connections who died while on active duty, but who were not included on the State's website or the monument. More research is needed to understand why they are not on the State's website.

The group then discussed the process & review of the names from the second and third lists, which had been presented previously to the Facilities Committee, who recommended discussing the process of compiling the names with the full Council

Craig noted the two highlighted names in yellow on last page, that they are veterans and were on active duty, recommending keeping those names on the list, would want a response from the family as to whether they want the family member's name included on the monument.

Carol questioned if it is the next of kin at time of death who would be contacted and suggested an opt out letter to families, along with a general news release.

Diane favored remembering the people in history, coming down on the side that these soldiers and those individuals will not be living in some number of years, thinking of their children or relatives for generations to come, and honoring those folks who gave their life in service to our country.

Joyce is concerned that we are not going to hear back from the families of those veterans on lists two and three.

Discussion regarding contacting families: Three different schools of thought were outlined—

1. No family contact as the names are in the public domain
2. Contact families and ask if they would like to have their veteran's name included on the monument, aka the "opt in."
3. Contact families and plan to include your family member's name, please let us know if any questions or concerns, aka the "opt out."

The Committee recommended an "opt in" letter to families—where families would affirmatively agree to include their veterans name on the monument.

Staff and Joyce will continue their research and update the full Council at a future meeting.

Events and Publicity Committee:

Event Debriefs Presented

- **2023 Events:** Events Committee will work to identify a lead person for each of the events this year. Council members were asked to add these events to their calendars.
- **Memorial Day** (organized by Lincoln Memorial Day Observance Association): Monday, May 29 evening ceremony/typically 8pm
- **Bricks of Honor Dedication** (organized by Lincoln Parks Foundation), Saturday, June 10 at 10 am
- **Patriot Day** (organized by VMGAC/coordinate with City-wide event at State Capitol), Monday September 11; time TBD—**may need to cancel/re-structure due to construction**
- **Veterans Day Parade** (organized by Lincoln Veterans Parade Group/Veterans Day Parade Committee), November XXX
- **Veterans Day** (organized by VMGAC), Saturday, November 11 at 11am in Auld Pavilion
- **Pearl Harbor Day** (organized by VMGAC), Thursday, December 7 at 11:55 am in Auld Pavilion

Diane inquired about including a military dog in a program, Shawn replied that we allow service dogs on grounds & in facilities. Diane will bring this issue to the Event Committee meeting.

Executive Committee:

Committee Chairpersons and Committee Members (current committee list in packets)

Special Outreach Committee: No Meeting

9. Announcements:

There are 2 Council vacancies—Chris Stokes and Allie Evers are no longer able to serve on the Council. Denise will send out the board application link to the group. The list of applicants was shared with the group to. Craig will follow up with current list of applicants to see if they continue to be interested in serving.

10. Adjourn

Next Quarterly Meeting: June 8, 2023, 7am (Antelope Enclosed Shelter, Antelope Park, 3200 Memorial Drive)

Respectfully Submitted:



Jamie Granquist, Recording Secretary